

January 8, 1997

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SUBJECT: **Deputy Secretary's Focus Report**

The following is a brief summary of Department of Transportation events and items of interest from the past month:

OPERATIONAL ITEMS:

GRAVEL TRUCKS GAIN DIRECT QUARRY ACCESS

The temporary on/off ramps from SR 14 to Fisher Quarry are now open. The ramps were constructed through a joint venture between Pacific Rock Products and Kiewit Pacific. The ramps provide gravel trucks direct quarry access to and from SR 14 and are in the same vicinity as where the new 192nd Avenue SE Interchange will be. The temporary on/off ramps eliminate hundreds of truck trips per day through the local residential areas and will only be operated until the 192nd Avenue SE Interchange is completed.

NEW BARRIER PLACED FOR IMPROVED SAFETY

On January 6, prime contractor Kiewit Pacific Co. began work on placing a precast concrete barrier in the median of I-5 from MP 33.0 to MP 36.4 (North Kalama to Longview Wye). The barrier is intended to eliminate vehicle cross-over accidents through the corridor. Work should be completed in March 1997, barring unforeseen delays caused from bad weather or material procurement.

FAVORABLE BID EARNS PROJECT AWARD

Design work for the SR 2/Profitt's Point to Deception Creek Bridge began in the fall of 1990 with originally projected ads for Stage 1 and Stage 2 in March '93 and December '94. Advertisement took place on November 18 and bids opened December 18. The low bid was submitted by KLB Construction Inc at \$7.74 million, 19% below engineer's estimate. The bid was awarded to KLB on December 23, 1996.

The original schedule called for an Environmental Assessment to be completed in May of 1991. That was soon revised to May of 1992. The EA was finally completed in December of 1993. However due to a change in status of the Marbled Murrelet and other minor project changes (including the elimination of originally proposed "rock varnishing") the USFS issued a revised /updated decision in November of 1996.

The project was originally budgeted at \$15.7 million. Before the project scope was revised the estimate had climbed to +/- \$19 million. The final engineer's estimate including all

agreements, engineering, contingencies, etc., was approximately \$12.5 million with contract construction estimated to be \$9.6 million. The final contract contains 151 items.

WSDOT/WSP PARTNERSHIP MAKING HIGHWAYS EVEN SAFER

North Central Region met with the Washington State Patrol on a regular basis this season to discuss issues of highway safety and to coordinate work. The focus this year was on snow and ice issues. A common language is being used by WSP and WSDOT to prioritize needed maintenance in snow and ice, thus ensuring the worst areas are addressed first. Also, in areas with limited workforce, road patrols by one entity can reduce the need for a road patrol by the other.

Other safety issues which involve coordination include working with LINK, the local transit agency, to review and recommend safe bus stop areas as well as joint appearances at public forums to discuss safety issues such as speed limits, school accesses, and pedestrian concerns.

SR 2 COVERED BY ROCK SLIDE

On December 11 a mass of rock slid on to SR2 at milepost 91.4 in Tumwater Canyon in the North Central Region. The slide covered eastbound and westbound lanes. State forces removed the smaller material and were able to open the eastbound lane. Traffic was routed to a shoulder widening and two way traffic was restored within four hours of the slide. An emergency contract was awarded to Gensinger Excavation of Wenatchee to remove the remainder of the rock slide. Approximately 1000 cubic yards were removed from the roadway. Some rocks as large as cars were broken up to be moved. Unstable rock remains on the slope above the roadway, which will be stabilized by a contract next summer. Until then, traffic will continue to use the widening and a portion of the eastbound lane. The slide area has been cordoned off from traffic with concrete barrier. The slope was identified as a number one priority in the unstable slope program. The presence of the endangered plant "showy stickseed" prevented the slope from being programmed for corrective action.

WSF VESSEL PROJECT UPDATE

Jumbo Mark II: MV Tacoma -

Hull outfitting and testing of mechanical systems continues dockside. All four main engines ran unloaded for a couple of hours on local control. The shipyard closed from December 25 to January 6, 1997. The MV TACOMA encountered some storm damage on underlayment and hull insulation due to heavy snow and rain.

Steel-Electric Class -

MV NISQUALLY delivered to Siemens at Lake Union Drydock on December 9, 1996. Redelivery date is scheduled for March 1, 1997.

Passenger Only Ferry - Contract award planned for January 6, 1997, with commencement of Contract scheduled for January 13, 1997. Delivery of boat No. 1 will be within 12 months of the commencement date.

WSF HOSTS SPECIAL HOLIDAY CRUISE

On December 15, 1996, the 13th annual Special People's Holiday Cruise took place aboard the M.V. YAKIMA. Over 700 children and adults with special needs and their chaperones were hosted by an all-volunteer WSF crew on a two-hour cruise around Puget Sound. Sponsors supplied food and incidentals to make the cruise possible.

OUTDATED SIGNS GET REPLACED

Statewide replacement of outdated identification signs at region complexes, maintenance facilities, pit, quarry and stockpile sites is nearly complete. Replacement signs were

fabricated at the statewide sign shop at Union Gap as fill-in work between highway sign orders. As a safety measure, no trespassing signs were also fabricated to allow posting of site boundaries. Existing site signs were inconsistent or non-existent. Some signs dated back to the Department of Highways, and even the Highway Commission.

WSDOT/STATE PATROL COMMUNICATION LINES OPEN

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) each operate large statewide mobile radio networks in the State of Washington to better economically provide public safety services to the citizens, facilitate the transportation of the State's \$80 billion annual movement of commerce and to serve the traveling public. The vehicles of the WSP and WSDOT need to communicate with each other at accident scenes on the highways, and during disasters, avalanche conditions, floods, snow and ice, and other weather related incidents to coordinate mitigation efforts.

A shortage of radio channels in the State prevented development of a common radio system for both agencies, forcing the WSP and WSDOT to operate on different systems which prevents inter-agency mobile communications. Until now, WSDOT has developed a translating radio repeater (cross band repeater) with units which have been placed at strategic locations around the state and can translate the 150 Mhz technology into the 800 Mhz technology (and vice-versa) permitting WSP and WSDOT to directly communicate with each other.

All planned and scheduled cross band repeaters (translators) for this winter have been installed in the North Central Region, South Central Region, Southwest Region, and Northwest Region. Stevens, Blewett, Snoqualmie and Satus Passes are also completed. White Pass and the Columbia River are also covered as they were previously installed by the Southwest Region. The Northwest Region is planning to jump ahead of the schedule when time permits and install Mt. Baker. The Washington State Patrol will be installing the remaining translators at scheduled locations when weather permits beginning in March of 1997.

WSDOT CLEARED OF CONTAMINATION CHARGES BY EPA

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) named the WSDOT Materials Laboratory as a possible contributor to the contamination of the Palermo well field - the city of Tumwater's water source. WSDOT took exception to such findings and hired an independent consultant to conduct a study. The consultant's findings found the Materials Laboratory was not a potential source for the contamination. Staff from the Environmental Services Branch met with two EPA site managers to present WSDOT's "independent" review and to state that if the Department had any evidence that the Materials Laboratory might be part of the problem, WSDOT would resolve it. But no evidence has been found that demonstrates Material Laboratory practices contributed to the problem, thus action on WSDOT's part is not needed nor warranted. The EPA agreed and unless there is evidence uncovered during a sophisticated non-intrusive ground penetrating radar type survey conducted in January, the Materials Laboratory will no longer be considered of interest.

CONTRACT AD & AWARD BIDS OPENED

November 1996 bids were opened on three preservation projects. The total engineer's estimate was \$15,483,162.00, with total bids of \$14,313,923.19, or 7.55 percent below the estimate. There were 194 uncompleted projects with a total work-in-progress dollar value of \$1,071,720,178.

STAMPEDE PASS LINE PROVES STRONGER THAN MOTHER NATURE

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) resumed regular freight service between Auburn and Pasco on its Stampede Pass line on Saturday, December 7. BNSF plans to expand service from the current two trains daily (one eastbound and one westbound) to eight-to-ten trains daily in late 1997. One value of this third railroad corridor through the Cascades was evident at month's end -- Stampede Pass was the only operating rail connection between eastern and western Washington when winter storms forced the closure of the Stevens Pass and Columbia Gorge rail lines.

STUDIES ON HOLD FOR PARK & RIDE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The feasibility studies for the King County/WSDOT/Perini Park and Ride Enhancement Project have been delayed thirty days to further analyze the impact of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) service on demand at selected park and ride sites. King County has set up a meeting with RTA to examine issues relating to the compatibility of the project with the RTA service plans and to explore alternative financing strategies. The public meetings were also postponed from February to March in order to finalize the feasibility study.

NINE SR 16 ALTERNATIVES TO BE PRESENTED AT PUBLIC MEETINGS IN MARCH

The scope of work for the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is currently being developed by the Olympic Region and United Infrastructure Company. The agreement is expected to be executed in late January. Public scoping meetings are scheduled in March, where the analysis of nine alternatives will be presented in five public workshops in the corridor. These alternatives range from double-decking the existing bridge, a new parallel bridge, transportation demand/system management to transit only solutions. A confirmed set of alternatives will be selected by WSDOT following the public meetings to advance into the EIS.

Public official briefings will be held in February to explain the proposed methodology for establishing a geographic boundary for the affected project area. Citizens who live within this boundary will be eligible to participate in the advisory election scheduled for Fall, 1998. City and county jurisdictions within this area will also be asked to appoint representatives to a Local Involvement Committee, which is scheduled to be established in September, 1997, after completion of the comprehensive traffic and economic studies required by law.

INTERPRETIVE MARKERS SLATED FOR SR 14

On December 10th, the Interpretive Markers Council (IMC) convened for a final review of the draft text of 20 interpretive markers. The markers will be installed in the Columbia River Gorge, primarily along SR 14. The US Forest Service received an ISTEPA grant for the new markers. Eight of the markers will be new markers to the Gorge and the IMC marker system, while six are replacing existing IMC markers. The council members from WSDOT, Washington State Parks and Recreation, and Washington State Historical Society reviewed the text, and are submitting their recommendations to the US Forest Service.

OEO SETS TERMS FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY VIOLATOR

Following the November 14, 1996 conciliation meeting with Rognlin's, Inc., for violations of its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements, WSDOT Office of Equal Opportunity reached the determination that in lieu of initiating formal sanction action, including an adjudicative hearing, Rognlin's, Inc. must agree to various terms set by OEO. Rognlin's must adhere to all contract requirements for Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity and is aware that failure on their part to comply with the commitments stipulated will result in formal sanction action.

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPROVED

The 1997-1999 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) has been approved by FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration. ISTEA requires each designated MPO to develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the state to develop a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as a condition for securing federal funds for transportation projects.

ISTEA requires each TIP to have a financial plan that addresses all federally funded projects inside the MPO's area of responsibility, with the STIP addressing statewide financial feasibility. Projects listed in the STIP are the only projects that will be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to utilize federal funds. The STIP is a three-year, fiscally constrained, prioritized program of transportation projects, composed of local and regional plans, along with the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), which provides a backbone for developing projects for the Intermodal transportation network in the state of Washington.

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) contains federally funded projects programmed for Calendar Years 1997, 1998 and 1999. Federal aid projects programmed in 1997 total about \$547 million. Through the planning process, these projects have been identified as those having the highest priority for available funding to the state's transportation program. The STIP will be available to the public on the Internet and in hard copy at WSDOT's regional offices.

IMPROVED SAFETY METHODS GETTING A TRIAL RUN

TransAid staff members met with members of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), the Union Pacific Railroad Operations Lifesaver, and the 3M Corporation to discuss a relatively new improvement for unsignalized railroad and highway crossings. This new protection method uses highly reflectorized sheeting on standard crossbuck signs to provide additional advance warning of a crossing.

During the meeting, a video of these new installations in Idaho was shown, and data showing the improvement that these installations have brought to grade crossings was distributed. The final outcome of the meeting was that the WUTC and members of the TransAid staff agreed to consider this new protection method as an improvement to passive protection in future project selections. The 3M representative and Operation Lifesavers also agreed to a test pilot project to install ten of these protective systems throughout the state at locations to be determined by WSDOT, TransAid, and the WUTC. The net benefit is that ten crossings within the state of Washington not currently protected by lights and gates will receive an additional degree of protection at no cost to WSDOT. In addition, WSDOT will be able to observe both nighttime and daytime operations to determine if this is an improvement in which WSDOT would like to participate in the future.

CURRENT LAW BUDGET LEGISLATIVE BOOK COMPLETE

The Budget office has completed the Current Law Budget Legislative Book that will be distributed to the legislature in early January. The document provides information needed to understand and evaluate the department's 1997-99 Current Law Budget proposal. It is divided into four major sections that together provide information about key issues and policies addressed within the proposal. The book contains an executive summary, budget summaries, program information and a section on available revenues.

WSDOT GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS ON CD-ROM

Graphic Communications completed their first CD-ROM disk for distribution, including artwork design on the State Highway Map City Index. Electronic publications include:

Purchasing Signature Authorities, the Construction Manual, the Disaster Plan, and October's Focus Report for electronic distribution. Newsletters included the EX•PRESS, Inland Crossings, SR 20 Corridor Construction Newsletter, and the SR 305 Sportsman Club Road Construction Newsletter. Manuals and reports include: Highway Surveying Manual, Local Agencies Guidelines, Local List Manual, Materials Manual, Technical Mathematics II, TransAid Manual, Right of Way Manual, and the WSF Human Resource Handbook.

ROUNABOUT TRAFFIC CONTROL MAY HAPPEN IN WA STATE

In conjunction with the City of Port Orchard and the Olympic Region, WSDOT is in the process of designing the first roundabout on a state highway in Washington. The roundabout has seen significant use in Europe and is beginning to see increasing use in the United States. The roundabout is similar to a traffic circle. The traffic circle is commonly described as "any intersection of two or more streets that is designed around a central island." Unlike a conventional intersection that concentrate vehicle conflicts at a single point, the traffic circle disperses the conflicts to a number of points.

ESTUARY CONSTRUCTION DUE TO BE COMPLETE IN JUNE 1997

The habitat mitigation estuary for cleanup of the West Harbor Operable Unit of the Eagle Harbor Superfund site was put out to bid by the Washington State Ferries on December 11. The construction of this estuary, named Schel-chelb for the historic Native American name for the area, marks the beginning of cleanup efforts at the old shipyard on the northside of Eagle Harbor. The two acre estuary is compensation for a one acre confined nearshore disposal facility which will be used to contain contaminated sediments dredged from around the old shipyard.

WSDOT is participating in the cleanup of the site as a responsible party due to the ownership of the Ferries' maintenance facility located on a portion of the old shipyard. The bid opening for the estuary is scheduled for January 7. Construction on the estuary is expected to be completed by June, 1997 with vegetation planting next spring. Final cleanup of the shipyard is not expected until 1998.

ABERDEEN BLUFFS ATTACKED BY MOTHER NATURE

SR 12 was blocked in both directions just east of Aberdeen by a slide that occurred late Sunday afternoon, December 29th. The slide - approximately 300 feet long - varied from 20 feet deep over the westbound lanes to five feet deep over the eastbound lanes. The slide material pushed the median barrier over to the outside guardrail, and took out several luminaires along the outside as well. Two-lane traffic was opened as of January 4th. Complete cleanup of the deepest buried lanes and restoration of other damaged items could require several weeks.

BLAIR BRIDGE CLOSURE SET FOR JANUARY 23

A \$3,095,903 contract to remove the Blair Waterway Bridge was executed on December 5. Bridge removal, which is part of the SR 509 construction project, is critical to the business development and expansion plans of the Port of Tacoma, as well as the Puyallup Tribe, both of whom have major properties on the upper Blair Waterway. A 30-day notice to advise motorists of permanent closure and removal of the bridge was posted at the bridge on December 23. The bridge will close to traffic on January 23, one day after opening to traffic of the new SR 509 corridor, and work to remove the structure will commence immediately. The new highway route will open to traffic on January 22 following a morning dedication ceremony.

WSDOT LENDS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN TRAVEL FORECASTING

WSDOT Planning staff was called upon by the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) for technical assistance in travel forecasting used to update TRPC's Regional Transportation Plan. These forecasts are developed through a computer modeling process which evaluates the effectiveness of various transportation alternatives that could be used to deal with existing and future traffic congestion in the Thurston County region.

KINGDOME AREA INTERMODAL ACCESS PROJECT MOVING FORWARD

The Kingdome Area Intermodal Access Project Environmental Assessment was sent to OSC/FHWA/FTA on December 11, 1996 and comments were due on December 26, 1996. OUM expects to return the edited document to FHWA/FTA for approval around January 10, 1997. The Office of Urban Mobility (OUM) is awaiting comments on the Memorandum of Understanding that defines the project for the six partners. The PFD's future as a partner is in question, but the project's need is not reduced without a baseball park. The traffic analysis and cost/benefit were conducted without baseball traffic. The event traffic is an irritant, but the everyday need is there due to growing congestion and train frequency.

I-405 MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR PROJECT LOOKS AT TRAVEL IN 2020

The Office of Urban Mobility distributed a progress report in December on the I-405 Multimodal Corridor Project. It provided a project update and summarized the results of technical work completed to date. The I-405 project is being undertaken to develop a corridor transportation plan for year 2020. It covers the length of I-405 from Tukwila to Swamp Creek, and is inclusive of the arterial network a half mile each side of the freeway.

Ten potential actions and three combinations of actions were tested separately to learn their performance, costs, and impacts on the corridor. Among others, these actions included aggressive expansion of I-405, capacity additions to arterials parallel to I-405, transit service increases, imposition of parking fees at selected employment-dense areas, and facility enhancements to HOV facilities.

The technical analyses suggest that year 2020 travel demand throughout the region, and certainly along the I-405 corridor, will overwhelm any single strategy that can be implemented. Therefore, the rational approach is one that offers multiple travel mode possibilities for users of the corridor. Even under the most optimistic assumptions, attaining today's travel conditions along the corridor in 2020 is highly unlikely.

Project tasks now shift from the technical to the decision-making process. In the next few months, representatives from agencies and jurisdictions in the corridor will be choosing specific projects, programs, and services that should be included in the preferred I-405 corridor transportation plan. The project should conclude in late Summer 97.

WSDOT ASSISTING IN THE MOVEMENT TO REDUCE FUEL TAX EVASION

Staff from the WSDOT Economics Branch met with the Fuel Tax Evasion Oversight Committee to discuss the final version of a bill that (if passed) will raise the point of taxation for special fuel to the terminal/rack. Gasoline and special fuel are currently taxed at the wholesale level. This bill would raise the point of taxation higher up the distribution chain to the terminal/rack and is part of an effort to reduce the level of fuel tax evasion in Washington. The bill will request legislation by the Fuel Tax Evasion Oversight Committee.

TRAFFIC REPORT VIDEO TRAINING POLICE OFFICERS

In support of the new Police Traffic Collision Report (PCTR), effective January 1, 1997, TDO staff finalized and released a one-hour training video with the assistance of Washington Interactive Television (WIT). The video was used to train approximately 1000 police officers on the use and content of the new PCTR at 24 interactive broadcast sites. Additionally, 500 video copies were distributed to law enforcement agencies for in-house training.

The new PCTR is part of the Collision Reporting and Statistical History (CRASH) project. As part of the CRASH training, 6000 instruction manuals were printed to assist law enforcement officers in completing the new forms. A second printing of 3500 was completed and sent to the State Patrol for distribution.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT THE HOT TOPIC AMONG WORKSHOPS

Staff from the Planning & Programming Service Center participated in a Steering Committee meeting to develop the agenda and staffing for the National Conference on Congestion Management, to be held in June in Irvine, California. The conference, sponsored by TRB, will be oriented to developing a national strategic research agenda relating to congestion management.

Congestion management is also the topic at a one-day regional workshop being held at the request of FHWA in May in the Seattle area. Invitees will not only include Washington professionals and groups involved in congestion management, but also interested parties from the other three FHWA Region 10 states. Workshop outcomes will be reported at the subsequent national conference.

FTA REGION 10 COORDINATION STUDY REPORT COMPLETE

With the printing and distribution of the final report completed, the Region 10 Coordination Study has come to an end. This one-year project identified barriers to coordination between transportation programs sponsored by social service, education, and transportation agencies; and proposed action plans for addressing them. The project covered the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. It was funded by the FTA, and administered by the Public Transportation Office and coordinated with the Federal Region 10 Coordination Council.

The report identified a range of real and perceived barriers including organizational, data, operating, and financial issues. The report also recommends legislative action to require coordination, and that the departments of transportation be lead agencies in making it happen.

QUALITY ITEMS:

STORMWATER GRANT PROGRAM WILL FUND IMPROVEMENTS

With passage of 2SHB 2031, the 1996 legislature made \$700,000 in Surface Transportation Program (STP) Enhancement Funds available to develop a management funding and implementation program to address state highway-related stormwater problems. A committee was formed consisting of representatives from cities, counties, WSDOT, the Department of Ecology (DOE), a business organization, and an environmental organization, to oversee the grant program.

The development of this grant program, under the committee's guidance, involved both the Environmental Affairs Office (EAO) and the TransAid Service Center working cooperatively to develop and implement this program. TransAid relied on the EAO for their

stormwater technical expertise while TransAid grant process procedures and award procedures were utilized.

The committee met November 22, 1996 and approved six applications for funding out of the \$700,00 available. Four of these projects were submitted by local agencies and two by WSDOT. WSDOT was a funding contributor in all four of the local agency projects. A total of 40 applications was received with requests for funding totaling approximately \$5 million.

WSDOT INVITED TO TALK QUALITY WITH GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Gary Smith of the Olympia Service Center Purchasing and Inventory, invited General Administration (GA) to educate their buying staff about the WSDOT Quality Process and the continuous Improvement Quality Team. The Quality Team focuses on improvement opportunities within state contracts and just wrapped up contract timeliness as an issue. The Quality Team's recommendation is all new state contracts be awarded 60 days prior to expiration of the old contract. The team includes members from WSDOT Purchasing, Maintenance, and GA buying staff. The GA invitation recognized that WSDOT is seeking win-win solutions that benefit both agencies through the Q2000 Quality Blueprint process.

GOOD NEWS ITEMS:

BRIEFING CONNECTS WSDOT SW REGION & LEGISLATURE

A legislative briefing was held on December 18, 1996. The informal gathering provided information and answered questions on projects and programs in the Southwest Region. Those who attended were:

Representative-Elect Tom Mielke
Representative John Pennington
Representative-Elect Mark Doumit
Representative Brian Hatfield
Representative Don Carlson
Representative Val Ogden
Senator-Elect Don Benton
Senator Al Bauer
Judy Nix (U.S. Representative Linda Smith)
Annette Cleveland (U.S. Senator Patty Murray)
Cathryn Treadwell-Nelson (U.S. Senator Slade Gorton)
Dean Lookingbill (RTC)

PARK-N-RIDE "FACE-LIFT" COMPLETE

The Kelso Area Chamber of Commerce orchestrated a community beautification project that included a complete face-lift for the Park-N-Ride located at Kelso Drive and Allen Street in Kelso, just off Exit 39 from Interstate 5. The completed project included cooperation from the City of Kelso and the Chamber to provide pre-planning and funding sources. The Chamber's leadership supported the effort to gain approval for the project from WSDOT officials. The Park-N-Ride is used to 98% capacity.

WSF WITHSTANDS HOLIDAY STORM BLAST

The "Holiday Blast" snow storm began Thursday, December 26 with regional weather related problems lasting at least through Monday, December 30. During this period, major disruptions of every kind were experienced throughout Puget Sound with the exception of Washington State Ferries. Of the 2,348 customer service trips scheduled during this 5 day period 2,218 were completed with minor or no delays - an overall completion rate of

94.5%. Of the 130 service trips canceled, 98 of the cancellations were at the request of the San Juan County Emergencies Services Office due to impassable road conditions on the islands. Vessels and crews were available for these trips. Elimination of the 98 cancellations from the data results in a 98.6% customer service trip completion rate. This outstanding record of service during the worst snow storm in at least 25 years is attributable to the resourcefulness and dedication of many WSF men and women that went beyond the call of duty.

WSF FARES WELL IN FIRST COURT CHALLENGE

The court challenge of the new passenger-only fast ferry procurement passed its first test. Judge Casey, Thurston County Superior court, denied J.M. Martinac Shipbuilding Corporation's request for a preliminary injunction of WSF's award to Dakota Creek. WSF is proceeding with the contract award which is projected to be signed by January 6, 1997.

WSDOT PRESENTS JEFFERSON COUNTY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Bob Holcomb, Olympic Region TransAid Engineer, and Denny Ingham presented Jefferson County a Project Excellence Award for the "Best County Project" of 1996. The award, first presented at the Counties Legislative Conference in Pasco and then to the Jefferson County Commissioners in Port Townsend, was for the county's work on the restoration of Chimacum Road.

In addition to acting as a connector between five communities and SR 16 and 19, Chimacum Road is also the main truck route to and from the Indian Island Naval Base and acts as a connecting route for the Marrowstone Island-Chimacum-Hadlock area with the Hood Canal Bridge and State Highway 101.

The \$694,000 project was funded by a federal ISTE A grant of \$595,000, with the remaining \$99,000 covered by local matching funds. Criteria for the award included cost effectiveness, public satisfaction/acceptance, construction excellence, effective project administration, environmental compatibility, enhancement of safety, and innovative design.

STUDENTS PLANT TREES ON I-5 OFF RAMP

Last month a group of about 70 adults and children, including students from Evergreen Elementary in Mountlake Terrace, planted approximately 460 native trees and shrubs at the 236th Street Southwest off ramp from I-5, adjacent to the school.

The old noise wall and berm were removed for the recent rebuilding of the 236th Street Southwest interchange. The existing trees and shrubs had been planted by the local community 20 years ago. The replacement trees were purchased by WSDOT.

In December, an environmental class for grades 3-6 at Evergreen Elementary studied the impact of I-5, plant identification, and how the environment around the school works. Guest speakers from WSDOT visited the classrooms to discuss landscaping, wetlands, the history of I-5 in the area, and noise impacts. The culmination of this class was the planting of the new trees.

FHA RECOGNIZES SAFETY ACHIEVEMENTS WITH AWARDS

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Highway Safety initiated a Highway Safety Awards competition to recognize outstanding safety achievements by federal, state, and local highway agencies. Winners are selected from projects carried out under the federal-aid highway program and the FHWA Section 402 Highway Safety

Program. This year's competition was the sixth and received 45 entries from 20 states and one region.

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission received an Operational Improvements Award for their Corridor Safety Program operated in conjunction with WSDOT. This program utilizes the efforts of state and local government and business and civic leaders to attack a problem roadway with a myriad of solutions. The corridor projects bring together local officials from such areas as law enforcement, engineering, public works, and emergency medical services. They address sections of roadway rather than spot problem locations. The government officials work with local elected officials and civic and business leaders to identify ways that the collision rate on their local problem roadway can be reduced.

From signs on the backs of local delivery trucks, and informational brochures, to increased law enforcement and roadway engineering changes, the success of the projects has been largely the result of local input and local control.

Estimated savings in medical and other costs were \$21,780,996 due to collisions that did not occur. The four most recent corridor safety projects saved society an estimated \$37 for every \$1 invested. The projects have reduced collisions an average of 11 percent and on some corridor roadways, serious injuries were down over 40 percent.

REMAINING FY 97 APPORTIONMENTS RELEASED

On December 24, 1996 it was announced by FHWA that the Department of Treasury corrected its Highway Trust Fund statement for 1995, which is used in the computation of certain FY 1997 Federal-aid highway apportionments. With the announcement of this correction, they are now in a position to compute final FY 1997 State-by-State apportionments and obligation ceiling. Computations are expected, including suballocations under the Surface Transportation Program, to be complete and posted in FHWA's Financial Management Information System by December 31, 1996. This is good news for Washington, as we will now be getting our fair share of the obligation authority (OA) for FFY 97.

RIDEFIND SOFTWARE GETS A TEST DRIVE

The Public Transportation worksite will be one of six statewide pilot sites for a new software being tested by the Office of Urban Mobility (OUM). The Ridefind software, donated to OUM by Microsoft for non-commercial use, will provide public and private sector employee transportation coordinators with a flexible means of tracking individual commuter data, carpool and vanpool data, as well as a great way of matching people who want to join either a vanpool or carpool with groups currently commuting in this manner. WSDOT will get the final, bug-free Ridefind installed sometime in February. It will be offered to all WSDOT worksites in Olympia/Lacey/Tumwater area at that time.

